



Professional Development Seminar on Managing Ecosystems Services from Tropical Forests

Liberia, Costa Rica – 25-30 July, 2016 and
Santiago, Chile – 2017

What?

The Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI), Canada's University of Alberta, Costa Rica's Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE), Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica (UNA), National Forest Financing Fund (FONAFIFO) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) announce a Professional Development Seminar (PDS) on Managing Ecosystems Services from Tropical Forests. The PDS is funded by the IAI with resources from the National Science Foundation (NSF). The seminar will involve two sessions, each one a weeklong. The first session will be held 25-30 July 2016 in Liberia, Costa Rica; the second session will be held in 2017 in Santiago, Chile. Between sessions, participants will interact among themselves and with IAI staff and seminar instructors through Internet-based tools.

Why?

Understanding ecosystem functioning is fundamental to preserve the goods and services necessary for human populations. This is particularly critical in Latin America, where high population's densities are concentrated in urban areas, poverty incidence is high in rural areas and managing ecosystems is very complex. Tropical forests are among the most important providers of goods and services and are the basis for the livelihoods of millions of people worldwide. There is a great need for training managers, policy makers, and scientists to help quantify and manage ecosystem services, as well as for learning from local communities and decision-makers that have gained significant experience on designing and carrying out conservation programs across the Americas. This is particularly relevant within the context of new development paradigms, such as the bioeconomy, which calls for a de-carbonized economy based on the sustainable use of biological resources for the provision of goods and services, and its relevance for the implementation of the 2030 Development Agenda approved in September 2015 by the UN General Assembly.

Who?

Up to 25 participants from IAI member countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela) covering a diversity of roles in decision-making and research communities including: (1) decision-makers from different tiers of government (e.g. agriculture, finance, science and technology, environment and natural resources); (2) graduate students and early career scientists of agricultural, biological, earth and social sciences; and (3) stakeholders - NGOs, community organizations, businesses, managers and practitioners.

Objectives and content

The seminar will develop an interdisciplinary approach based on theoretical, practical and social interaction with local communities and experts that have designed and implemented ecosystem service programs. The course will encourage participants to discuss theoretical frameworks, learn from applied ones, and assess people and institutions' success and failures from their implementation experiences. Several experts, practitioners, local community members, students and IAI network scientists will engage in discussions of ecological functions, the role of social actors, and the success and failures of economic valuation approaches as part of a common dialogue. The seminar will involve theoretical discussions/presentations, hands-on exercises and visit to field sites where projects are implemented in Costa Rica.

First PDS session: The seminar to take place in Costa Rica, a country with a vast experience on ecosystem services valuation and implementation of programs to pay for ecosystem services, will explore:

Topic 1: Forest ecology and provision of ecosystem services: this section will cover fundamentals of ecology related to ecosystem functioning, land use planning and the provision of ecosystem services:

- Ecosystem goods and services of tropical forests
- Existing frameworks to evaluate provision of ecosystem services
- Frameworks to incorporate social actors into decision-making process
- Interdisciplinary frameworks in the tropics for managing ecosystems

Topic 2: Economic valuation of ecosystem services, lessons from practitioners:

- Concepts, frameworks, and applications
- Economic valuation methods
- Tools for valuating ecosystem services

Topic 3: Ecosystem services and social actors:

- Success and failures of implemented ecosystem services programs. A dialogue with local communities.

Intersession: Between the first and second sessions, groups established at the first session will work on the development of PDS science and policy products (i.e. publications, policy briefs, others to be defined). The working groups will interact through discussion groups or electronic fora, and "meet" virtually (about once-twice a month) with IAI staff and PDS leaders to review progress in publication development. Virtual meetings may also include additional tutoring on topics explored in the first session.

Second PDS session: The second session will be held at ECLAC's headquarters in Santiago, Chile. The program will explore elements associated with the challenges presented with the quantification of ecosystem services, the presentation of individual PDS science and policy products produced by the participants, and extend the dialogue with national and international agencies via collaboration with ECLAC.

Application Information

Languages: The program will be carried out in both English and in Spanish. Therefore, applicants must be proficient in one and have a sound understanding of the other language in order to understand, communicate, and participate actively.

Applicants must fill out the IAI on line form and submit a short CV (no more than 2 pages) as well as a reference letter, from his/her immediate supervisor indicating the interest of his/her organization on having the applicant involved on the PDS and the expected benefits that such participation can have on their daily activities. Applicants must clearly state the reasons for his/her personal and professional interest in the seminar and why he/she should be selected to participate.

To apply

1. Access the Seminar page (<http://www.iai.int/?p=11917>) to download the **APPLICATION FORM**.
2. Fill out the form and also send a short CV (up to 2 pages), and a reference letter by email to: iai.costarica2016@dir.iai.int
3. Make sure you send 3 files in your application submission: application form, CV and a reference letter.
4. Upon submission of your application, you should receive a confirmation email. If you do not receive it, please contact us at iai.costarica2016@dir.iai.int

Applications are due by the end of the day of **7 April 2016 (mid-night Montevideo time, Uruguay)**.

Participation in the first session does not automatically qualify for the second session. Acceptance for the second session will be communicated only after the first session and upon evaluation of the participation and commitment of participants to work on PDS products and outputs.

Financial Support: Full and/or partial travel support is available for a limited number of participants. Therefore, the IAI encourages institutional co-funding. Participants will be selected based on the quality of the application and relevance of the professional and institutional work to the PDS themes. In addition, co-funding by applicant's home institution will be also considered. There are no application or seminar fees.

Applicants who are selected and participate actively in all sessions of the seminar in Costa Rica will receive a seminar certificate.

If you need further information contact us at iai.costarica2016@dir.iai.int